Of Philosophers and Kings: Concerning Philip II of Macedon's Alleged "Debt" to Plato

By K.R. Moore

Bio:

K.R. Moore is senior lecturer in the History of Ideas at Teesside University in Middlesbrough, UK. Dr. Moore completed his PhD at the University of St. Andrews, writing up his thesis on Plato's *Laws*. He is the author of a number of books and articles mainly on Plato but, more recently, essaying into the scholarly realms of Alexander, much to his delight. He teaches classes on Greek and Roman History including one titled Images of Alexander the Great, which specifically addresses the latter's reception and historiographical traditions.

Abstract:

A fragment of Carystius' *Historical Notes*, preserved by Athenaeus in Book XI of the *Deipnosophistae*, reports that Phillip II owed his kingship to Plato because the latter had sent an emissary to Perdiccas III of Macedon, Phillip's brother and the king at that time, one Euphraeus of Oreus, who persuaded him to put Philip in charge of a territory of Macedon. This placed him in a prime position to ascend to the throne when Perdiccas was killed by the Illyrians in 359 BC and, by extension, made it possible for Alexander III of Macedon to become king. This article will consider the validity of that assertion through a close examination of this source, along with Demosthenes' *Third Philippic*, 59–62, Diogenes Laertius' *Plato* III.40, Favorinus, *Memorabilia* III (quoting Theopompus) and others that lend some credibility to the assertion. Could this extraordinary claim actually be true? Or were the likes of Athenaeus and others promoting their own pro-Platonic agenda, trying to garner some credit for Alexander's legacy? Or could both be the case? This article is at once a study in Hellenistic receptions of Alexander and a kind of "thought experiment" in terms of historical causation. Phillip was a resourceful man. Even if he had not been so readily placed to assume the kingship (either through Plato's interference or otherwise) he might still have become king on the death of Perdiccas by other means. This is one of the great "what ifs?" of history and I fully acknowledge that there are limitations as to what we can know about the causal effects of these events for certain. A careful examination of the sources and their claims will no less shed some light on the matter.

Article:

The causes of major historical events can seldom be attributed to a single action. Where they have been, the arguments run the risk of being oversimplifications or over-generalisations on

the part of those who hazard to make them. In the case of Alexander the Great's rise to power and conquest there have been, and will likely always be, various attempts to attribute his success to the influence of his tutor, Aristotle, and a comparable number, if not more, refutations of that position. How does one measure the intangible influence of philosophy on an individual and his accomplishments? We have no definitive metric that may be applied in order to evaluate that. In the case of the reported actions of individual philosophers, however, causal links may be better established. Even so, many sober-minded scholars might think it ludicrous to attribute the rise of the Kingdom of Macedon under Philip II, along with Alexander's subsequent conquests, to a decision made by Aristotle's teacher, Plato, sometime before the Conqueror was born. Yet we have that very assertion, in at least two sources, that Philip II of Macedon acquired the beginning of his kingship through Plato's agency. It is my intention here to interrogate this claim, to examine the evidence and to determine if there can be any merit to such a remarkable assertion. I shall do so through a careful examination of the sources, their transmission and historical context along with considering whether Plato had the motive, means and opportunity to exert such influence as reported.

Plato allegedly had some kind of relationship with Perdiccas III of Macedon, Philip's brother and king before him. Certainly the controversial *5th Letter* supports such a position and the question of its authenticity looms large over this issue. Much of the evidence for this relationship comes from Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* and the older material which it contains. He indicates:

> And this is the very same Plato whom Speusippus represents as having, while he professed to be a great friend of Archelaus assisted Philip to get possession of the kingdom. At all events, Carystius of Pergamum, in his *Historical Notes*, writes as follows:—"Speussipus, hearing that Philip used calumnious language in disrespecting Plato, wrote something of this sort in his letter to him: 'Just as if men did not know that Philip originally obtained the kingdom by the assistance of Plato.' For Plato sent Euphraeus of Oreus to Perdiccas, who persuaded him to apportion a certain district to Philip; and so he, maintaining a force in that country, when Perdiccas died, having all his forces in a state of readiness, seized the supreme power." But whether all this is true or not, God knows.[1]

This excerpt directly references the extant *Letter of Speussipus to Philip II*, to which I shall presently return. The portioning of territory to Philip probably took place in 364 BC. He may have been training his troops "and experimenting with different military equipment and tactics" for at least five years prior to the disaster of 359, when his brother was killed by the Illyrians.[2] If the contents of this letter are correct, then Plato (via Euphraeus) facilitated Philip being ideally poised to assume the kingship on his brother's demise—a situation that perhaps neither of them originally imagined. A misunderstanding by the Roman writer Justin, writing probably in the 2nd century AD, in his *Epitome* of Trogus, has led to the assumption that Philip had held the regency for Perdiccas' heir, Amyntas, and then usurped him to seize the

[1] ATHENAEUS, *Deipnosophistae,* 11.506d–f.
[2] EDWARD M. ANSON, *Alexander the Great: Themes and Issues*, London 2013, 49.

throne.[3] Anson has demonstrated that there was no formal system of succession established in the Kingdom of Macedon at this time and that no regency existed for Amyntas.[4] Philip assumed the kingship since he was the eldest and most capable heir *in situ*, with the support of the nobles and the army, on his brother's death. Amyntas Perdicca, still a child, would have been considered Philip's primary heir until his first son Arrhidaeus was born, probably in 337, when Amyntas would have then been relocated to the second tier of potential heirs.[5] Philip ascended the throne of Macedon because he was a royal heir who was present and able to do so at the time. And, if the letter of Speussipus is to be believed, he was present and able due to Plato's interference by proxy in Macedonian politics.

Plato's friend and student Euphraeus of Oreus (*fl*. *ca*. 4th century BC; d. *ca*. 342 BC/341 BC), from northern Euboea, appears to have been highly active in Macedonian politics in addition to his speculative studies, acting first as an adviser to Perdiccas III of Macedon and then as an opponent of Philip II and his supporters in Oreus. Information regarding his life is very limited, however, and few facts about it are mentioned in more than one source. He first appears in the *5th Letter* of Plato (499), later in Demosthenes' *3rd Philippic* (59–62), and in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*, which repeats the information about him contained in Carystius of Pergamum's *Historical Notes*, now lost. I shall return to Euphraeus in more detail later.

The fact that Speussipus, Plato's successor in the Academy, corresponded with Philip II is attested by the survival of at least one extant letter.[6] This *Letter of Speussipus to Philip II* is a sustained attack on Isocrates and his school, along with the polemics of Theopompus, and the influence that they were attempting to assert over Philip. It appears to have been a private letter rather than a public one.[7] Natoli has made a strong case for accepting its validity on the grounds of "1) language and style, 2) coherence, depth and subtlety of argument and 3) historical allusions that point to a particular date of composition" and I will leave that exhaustive commentary for the reader to peruse at their leisure.[8] The historical allusions in the letter point to a date for its composition between 342 and 341 BC.[9] Markel argues that the "letter of Speussipus, when it is considered in its precise historical context, displays more open support of the Macedonian king than the *Philippus* of Isocrates".[10] It was part of an ongoing rivalry between the Academy, the School of Isocrates and Theopompus at a time when Philip's popularity was at an all-time low in Athens due in no small part to Macedonian hegemony over Amphipolis and the additional powers that Macedon demanded through the embassy of Python. In the Athenian Assembly that met in 344/3 to discuss the king's terms,

---

[3] MARCUS JUNIANUS JUSTINUS, *Epitome* of the *Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus, trans. with notes, by the REV. JOHN SELBY WATSON*, London 1853, 7.6.6.

[4] ANSON, *Alexander the Great*, 23.

[5] See W. GREENWALT, "The Search for Arrhidaeus" *Ancient World* 10 (1984), 69-77; *contra* C. EHRHARDT, "Two Notes on Philip of Macedon's First Interventions in Thessaly", *Classical Quarterly* 17 (1967), 296-301 on the date of Arrhidaeus' birth.

[6] E. BICKERMANN AND J. SYKUTRIS, *Speusipps Brief am König Philip*. Text, *Übersetzgung, Untersuchungen*. Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Philologisch-historische Klasse. Bd. 80. 3, 1928.

[7] ANTHONY FRANCIS NATOLI, *The Letter of Speussippus to Philip II: Introduction, Text, Translation and Commentary* in *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Heft 176, Stuttgart 2004, 22. BICKERMANN, *Speusipps Brief,* thought it must be a public letter.

[8] NATOLI, *The Letter of Speussippus to Philip II*, 24.

[9] NATOLI, *The Letter of Speussippus to Philip II*, 27-30;

[10] MINOR M. MARKLE III, "Support of Athenian Intellectuals for Philip: A Study of Isocrates' *Philippus* and Speussipus' Letter to Philip", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 96 (1976), 80-99, 92.

Demosthenes delivered his famous *2nd Philippic*.[11] With Macedon in ascendance, there was clearly an active interest amongst philosophers and their schools in cultivating close ties with her king. For sixteen years since Euphraeus had his falling out with Philip, the Academy had lacked close ties with Macedon, and their major source of support in the tyrants of Syracuse had completely vanished. Philip was now the most powerful ruler in Europe, and many intellectuals looked hopefully towards him for patronage. The head of a given philosophic school in 343/2 would have regarded the appointment of one of his pupils as tutor to the king's son Alexander as the most promising means of gaining any long-term influence over, and support from, the Macedonian court.

In the surviving letter, Speussipus reminds Philip of Plato's beneficial involvement in the affairs of Macedon whilst condemning the influences of rival philosophers. Speussipus also gives support for Philip's claims to privileges and territories which had not been discussed during the negotiations with Python's embassy in 344/3. As an additional bid for favour, he bolstered Antipater's mythological backing for Philip's control of the Amphictyonic League, the leadership of Delphi and for his aims at Ambracia.[12] It would have been particularly indiscreet of Speusippus to support Philip's claim to Ambracia *after* he had failed in an attempt to capture it; Antipater and Speusippus likely presented their arguments shortly in advance of his march against that city, or in the later part of 343, which helps to date the letter.[13] Speussipus was keen to attack Plato's opponents.[14] He writes:

> And I hear too that Theopompus is acting in an altogether reprehensible manner at court and that he is slandering Plato; and this as if Plato had not laid the basis for your rule during the reign of Perdiccas…[15]

This reiterates the claim made in the fragmentary letter quoted above from Athenaeus and should be considered alongside it. If we accept Natoli and others' conclusions that the *Letter of Speussipus to Philip II* is authentic, then it is clearly alluding to the involvement of Euphraeus of Oreus as a well-known and accepted fact. There is, of course, room for doubt. It could be that Speussipus believed this version of events to be true, whether it was or not, and one might also point out that there was a kind of propagandistic campaign on the part of pro-Academy individuals, at the time and later on, who sought to promote the notion of the debt that Philip II owed to Plato. While the latter was surely the case, the substance of the letter's claim seems no less valid. That the letter of Speussipus was, either in whole or in part, successful in winning Philip's favour could be surmised by the appointment of Aristotle in *ca*. 343 as tutor for Alexander. But this causal link is tenuous. The philosopher had been a resident "in Macedonia as son of the personal friend and physician of Amyntas III," and he had joined the Academy in 367/6.[16] Markle, following Fredricksmeyer, argues that the persuasiveness of Speussipus' letter was instrumental in Aristotle's appointment. However,

---

[11] See IAN WORTHINGTON, *By the Spear: Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Rise and Fall of the Macedonian Empire,* Oxford 2014, 73 ff.

[12] MARKLE, "Support of Athenian Intellectuals for Philip", 95; see too FRANK LESLIE VATAI, *Intellectuals in Politics in the Greek World: From Early Times to the Hellenistic Age,* London 1984*,* 111.

[13] MARKLE, "Support of Athenian Intellectuals for Philip", 92, n.29; *cf*. DEMOSTHENES 9.72.

[14] See GIUSEPPE SQUILLACE, "Consensus Strategies Under Philip and Alexander" in ELIZABETH CARNEY and DANIEL OGDEN (eds.), *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*, London and New York 2010, 69-80, 74 ff.

[15] BICKERMANN and SYKUTRIS, *Speusipps Brief am König Philip*, 30.12.

[16] ERNST A. FREDRICKSMEYER, "Once More the Diadem and Barrel-Vault at Vergina", *American Journal of Archaeology* 87.1 (Jan., 1983), 99-102, 101; see MARKLE, "Support of Athenian Intellectuals for Philip", 96.

Vatai favours the position that it was on account of the relative unpopularity of both Isocrates' school and the Academy in Athens at the time along with Aristotle's close connections with the royal household, saying that Philip picked him for his "proven qualities".[17] We do not know all of the negotiations, deliberations and finer details that led to this decision. Speussipus himself would have been the obvious choice if Philip were to pick someone from the Academy. It was a Pyrrhic victory for them at any rate since Aristotle, who was engaged in researches at Mytilene at the time, had distanced himself from the Academy in the five or so years since Plato's death, perhaps being regarded by some there as a kind of apostate due to his rejection of the Theory of Forms.[18] Arguably Aristotle's appointment could be read as a slight against the Academy; still, he was one of their *alumni* and that counted for something or, at any rate, assuming they were able to choke down their bile, it could be repurposed as useful spin.

The Academy's fortunes aside for the moment, how did the fragmentary letter purporting Plato's role in sending Euphraeus to Macedon get preserved first in Carystius (2nd BC) and thence in Athenaeus of Naucratis (*fl. ca*. late 2nd, early 3rd century AD)? Athenaeus was a Greek who was born in Romanised Egypt, in a city that had Hellenic roots dating back to the 8th century BC. Naucratis was almost directly between Memphis and Alexandria and enjoyed a cultural heritage combining both Greek and Egyptian traditions. One can assume some interest on Athenaeus' part in the legacy of Alexander the Great due to this, the extent of which however is not attested in the sources. Athenaeus probably lived during the reign of the Stoic philosopher/emperor Marcus Aurelius. There are a number of negative allusions in the text of the *Deipnosophistae* to Commodus which indicate that its author at least outlived Marcus by a number of years. The famous physician Galen and (apparently) the jurist Ulpian are present as characters in this dialogue, although there is some debate about the identity of the latter. As with Plato's characters who are based on real-life individuals, they are all heavily fictionalised in Athenaeus, and the majority of the 24 guests at the banquet take no part in the conversation. If the character of Ulpian is in fact identical with the well-known jurist of the same name, then the *Deipnosophistae* was probably written after his death in 223.[19] This late-Second Sophistic treatise evokes the literary symposium, again similar to that of Plato's, of learned disquisitions on a range of subjects suitable for such an occasion although it entails a satirical dimension as well as presenting subversive views at times.[20] Indeed, as Baldwin remarks, "the dialogue is ushered in on a note of parody of Plato's *Phaedo* (1.2a)".[21] We can deduce a kind of affinity for Plato in Athenaeus; but does it amount to sufficient bias to alter the facts in his favour? Some have thought precisely the opposite.

It is undoubtedly the case that a number of sources employed by Athenaeus were hostile to Plato and his associates. Most of this anti-Platonic polemic, some of which is quite vicious and self-consciously absurd, may be found at *Deipnosophistae* 5.215c ff. and 11.506a ff., proximate to our fragmentary letter of Speussipus. The hostile tradition preserved in Athenaeus does "not hesitate to accuse Plato of such faults as pride, greed, plagiarism, jealousy, gross errors, self-contradiction, lying and flattery of tyrants."[22] For example

---

[17] VATAI, *Intellectuals in Politics,* 111.

[18] See INGEMAR DÜRING, *Aristotle and the Ancient Biographical Tradition*, Stockholm & Göteborg 1957, 318, 462-3.

[19] GEORG KAIBEL, *Athenaei Naucratitae Dipnosophistarum Libri XV,* Vol. 3, Leipzig 1890, 561–564, had put it at 228 AD but more modern scholarship has placed around 223, see BALDWIN below.

[20] See LAURA MCCLURE, "Subversive Laughter: the Sayings of Courtesans in Book 13 of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*", *The American Journal of Philology*, 124.2 (Summer, 2003), 259-294.

[21] BARRY BALDWIN, "Athenaeus and His Work", *Acta Classica,* 19 (1976), 21-42, 41.

[22] W.K.C. GUTHRIE, *A History of Greek Philosophy IV: Plato: the Man and His Dialogues*, Cambridge 2000, 9-10.

Athenaeus' interlocutors take up a definition found in Aristotle's *Poetics*, to the effect that the Socratic dialogues are examples of mimetic prose, in order to sophistically condemn Plato for himself using *mimēsis,* on account of which he had cast Homer and other poets out of the *Republic*.[23] Aristotle's definition of *mimēsis* was purely descriptive and not polemical, as it is deployed in Athenaeus or his sources. However, at *Deipnosophistae* 11.505b not only is Plato criticised for effectively being a hypocrite, he is also "further attacked on the grounds that he did not invent the dialogue genre himself."[24] This passage is considered by Düring to have been derived directly out of the material used by Athenaeus from Herodicus of Babylon (2nd century BC).[25] The latter produced one of the most vehement attacks on the Socratics written in antiquity, *Reply to a Socrates-worshipper* (*pros ton philosōkratēn*).[26] Significant extracts of this treatise have been preserved in books 5 and 11 of the *Deipnosophistae*. Herodicus' pamphlet is directly referenced only once by Athenaeus, although there are several other references to him without a title being given.[27] Karl Schmidt has argued that most of the attacks on philosophers in general, and on Plato in particular, in these books of the *Deipnosophistae* were taken from Herodicus.[28] Other polemics against Plato in Athenaeus come from Theopompus of Chios (*fl.* 4th Century BC), a student of Isocrates, who wrote *Against the School of Plato* (*kata tēs Platōnos diatribēs*) and who had also, at different times, been alternatively laudatory of and hostile to Philip II of Macedon.[29] These and other traditions of thought are preserved in Athenaeus' dramatic dialogue. As with many works of fiction, it is not possible to know precisely what the author believed or intended.

The trend in the scholarship on Athenaeus around Kaibel's time, in the mid/late-19th Century, had been to regard him merely as a "diffuse antiquarian" presenting a miscellany of data uncritically, and also as a source of humour. Others, like Schleiermacher took considerable umbrage at the negative representations of Plato. Commenting on *Deipnosophistae* 11.507, he writes "we see hence what bad authorities Athenaeus followed in what he says against Plato, or what inconsiderate use he made of his *collectaneae*"; although, he does pointedly uphold the authenticity of *Letter of Speussipus* cited in this passage to the

---

[23] ARISTOTLE, *Poetics,* in R. KASSEL (ed.), *Aristotle's Ars Poetica*, Oxford 1966, 1447a28-b11; on the tradition that Plato was indebted to Sophron for the origin of the mimetic prose dialogue, see M.W. HASLAM, "Plato, Sophron, and the dramatic dialogue" in *BICS* 19 (1972), 17-38 along with D. CLAY, "The origins of the Socratic dialogue" in P.A. VAN DER WAERDT (ed.), *The Socratic Movement,* Ithaca/London 1994, 23-47, 33-37.

[24] ANNE D. R. SHEPPARD, *Studies on the 5th and 6th Essays of Proclus' Commentary on the* Republic, Göttingen 1980, 125 (*Hypomnemata: Untersuchungen zurantike und zu ihrem Nachleben* H.61)

[25] INGEMAR DÜRING, *Herodicus the Cratetean: A study in anti-Platonic Tradition,* Stockholm & Göteborg 1941, 25.

[26] See JAAP-JAN FLINTERMAN, "'... largely fictions ...': Aelius Aristides on Plato's dialogues", *Ancient Narrative,* 1 (2000-2001), 32-54.

[27] ATHENAEUS, *Deipnosophistae* 215 ff; Athenaeus refers to Herodicus twice without mentioning a title. At 192b there is a comparison of the convivial traditions of Homeric heroes with the proceedings of *symposia* as described by Plato, Xenophon, and Epicurus (Ath. 186d ff.), this is presumably derived from a treatise titled the *peri sumposiōn*, and it is rounded off with a quotation from Herodicus; at 219c Herodicus is cited as the source for a poem, allegedly by Pericles' famous mistress Aspasia, that portrayed Socrates as chasing after Alcibiades rather than the latter chasing the former.

[28] K. SCHMIDT, *De Herodico Crateteo*, Elbing 1886. Schmidt was followed Düring's *Herodicus* (1941), which entailed an edition with commentary of Herodicus' fragments; see also J. GEFFCKEN, "Antiplatonica" in *Hermes* 64 (1929) 87-109, 98-101, esp. 99 n. 1, and, more recently, M.B. TRAPP, "Plato in the *Deipnosophistae*" in D. BRAUND & J. WILKINS (eds), *Athenaeus and his world. Reading Greek culture in the Roman Empire,* Exeter 2000, 353-363, 359ff.

[29] *Deipnosophistae* 6.508c-d = JACOBY *FGrH* 115 F259. See GUTHRIE, *A History of Greek Philosophy IV,* 9 n. 2.

effect that Plato was instrumental in the rise of Philip II of Macedon.[30] Schleiermacher's view, being perhaps overly defensive of Plato, is that Athenaeus was too indiscriminate in his selection and presentation of source material, lacking critical judgement and discretion. However, this rather dismissive stance has been largely rejected in current scholarship, which has sought to reform the opinion of Athenaeus as a skilled polymath and relevant social commentator. Scholarly interest in him has markedly increased in recent decades.[31] As such, the *Deipnosophistae* is now considered both an important literary work, replete with symbolic meaning, as well as an amassed body of useful information from sources that we would not otherwise possess. Whatever else he may have been, Athenaeus was certainly a consummate antiquarian who collected sayings, letters and fragmentary texts, many of which are no longer extant except in his preservation of them. In this way he must have acquired the letter of Speussipus which was preserved in Carystius of Pergamum's *Historical Notes*. It remains impossible to determine with certainty whether Athenaeus introduced biased information on Plato and Philip II; yet, he appears to have been meticulous and accurate in preserving citations from prose works and, in some cases, he has transmitted them in a better state than they can be found in the other extant manuscripts.[32] I am inclined to think that Athenaeus' antiquarian tendencies might have been sufficient to represent an accurate account of the material within a given source and to that source we shall turn next for consideration.

Both the extant *Letter of Speussipus to Philip II* (in excerpts) and the fragment quoted above from Athenaeus are referenced as being located in the works of Carystius of Pergamum, a 2nd Century BC writer described by Jacoby as a "Literatur-historiker".[33] Caryistius quotes from section 12 of the full letter that we have today, attributing Philip's kingship to Plato.[34] Very little is known about Carystius apart from the references to him in Athenaeus which mostly come from his now lost *Explanatory Notes on Historical Subjects* or sometimes just referred to as the *Historical Notes* (*hypomneimata*). He produced another work, *on Dramatic Performances* (*didaskaliai*), no longer extant, in which he recorded authors, dates, notable activities and interpretive issues such as the origins of terms. The material available to Carystius appears to have been extensive and he is regarded by modern scholars as having been a serious historian.[35]

The letters themselves were probably preserved both in the Academy's archives as well as in the court records of the Kingdom of Macedon. Some two centuries after Speussipus' time, Carystius probably had access to them through the library of Pergamum. The *Letter of Speussipus to Philip II* is typically included amongst those of Isocrates, in the extant manuscripts, which implies that the latter may have obtained it from his associates at the Macedonian court as part of his campaign to besmirch the reputation of the Academy.[36] It is also possible that both the letter and the fragment quoted in Athenaeus were part of the collection of documents of Speussipus, said to have been purchased by Aristotle for one

---

[30] FRIEDRICH SCHLEIERMACHER, W. DOBSON (trans.), *Introductions to the Dialogues of Plato*, Cambridge 1836, 425-426.
[31] JOHN PAULAS, "How to Read Athenaeus' *Deipnosophists*" in *The American Journal of Philology,* 133.3 (Fall, 2012), 403-439; see too BALDWIN, "Athenaeus and His Work", *passim*.
[32] See K. ZEPERNICK, "Die Exzerpte des Athenaeus in dem *Dipnosophisten* und ihr Glaubwürdigkeit", *Philologus* 77 (1921), 311-363.
[33] F. JACOBY, "Karystios von Pergamon", in PAULY-WISSOWA-KROLL-MITTELHAUS, *Real Encyclopädie der classischen Alternumswissenschaft,* Stuttgart: 1893, 10.2, col. 2054.
[34] See CARYSTIUS F.1, in C. MÜLLER, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, Paris 1841-1870, reprinted Frankfurt 1975, 4.356-357 = Athenaeus 506e-f.
[35] NATOLI, *The Letter of Speussippus to Philip II*, 23-24.
[36] See R. HARDER, "Prismata" in *Philologus*, 85 (1930), 250-254.

talent, which was then bequeathed to his successor Theophrastus. Either of these men may have allowed the Great Library of Alexandria to make copies of them or Alexandria, and later Pergamum, may have obtained them from additional copies that their owners or others had made.[37] It is worth noting that the earliest references to the *Epistles* of Plato also come from the 2nd Century BC, having been classified by the grammarian Aristophanes of Byzantium who was head librarian of Alexandria (appointed *ca*. 195, died 180 BC).[38] By contrast, the surviving letters of Isocrates and Demosthenes do not possess such an ancient pedigree in terms of confirmed historical references.[39]

It seems, then, that there is little reason to doubt the authenticity of the sources that make the claim of Philip II's debt to Plato; but what about the veracity of that claim? A good investigator would seek to establish motive, means and opportunity. On the former point, one can readily adduce Plato's wide-ranging interest in politics alongside his acquaintance and (established) correspondence with a number of political leaders of his era. There is every indication that Plato's interest in politics extended beyond the realm of *theoria* well into that of *praxis*. For example, there are Plato's political ventures in Sicily. Plutarch tells us that, under his influence, Dion of Syracuse sought to establish a constitution "of the Spartan or Cretan type, a mixture of democracy and royalty, with an aristocracy overseeing the administration of important affairs".[40] Of course, that particular experiment was, to say the least, nearly disastrous for the Athenian philosopher. Even so, he has expressed in his writings a particular fascination with kingship along with the potential for a powerful ruler to undertake sweeping political reforms.[41] He also wrote that philosophy *should* influence politics for beneficial ends, saying:

> Mankind will not be rid of its evils until either the class of those who philosophise in truth and rectitude attain political power or when those who are the most powerful in cities, under some divine dispensation, really get to philosophising.[42]

And he enthusiastically encouraged this sort of activity. More than a few of his students took their lessons in political science abroad and influenced affairs all over Hellas with varying degrees of success.[43] The Academy is reported to have entertained many such connections. Its graduates were renowned for their expertise in political, legal and constitutional studies and, as such, they were often retained as advisors to a number of communities in the ancient

---

[37] See DIOGENES LAËRTIUS, in R.D. Hicks (ed.), *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Cambridge, MA 1972, 4.5; AULUS GELLIUS 3.17.3; STRABO 13.1.54; PLUTARCH, *Life of Sulla* 26.1-2. ATHENAEUS (3a-b) also reports an alternative possibility inasmuch as he says that Ptolemy Philadelphus purchased Aristotle's library for Alexandria.

[38] See DIOGENES LAËRTIUS 3.62.

[39] NATOLI, *The Letter of Speussippus to Philip II*, 24.

[40] NEPOS, *Dion*, in ALBERT FLECKEISEN (ed.), *Vitae: Cornelius Nepos*, Leipzig 1886, 2, 4.1-3; 5.4-5; 11.2; 13.1-4, 53.2. The extent of his success was considerably less than Plutarch's optimistic version here, for more on which see KURT VON FRITZ, *Platon in Sizilien und das Problem der Philosophenherrschaf,* Berlin 1968, 5-62. On Plato and the Pythagoreans in Sicily cf. Cicero, *Rep*. 1.10; *Fin*. 5.29.87; *Tusc. Disp*. 1.17.39. Also, on Plato in Sicily, see PLATO, *7th Letter*, *passim*.

[41] PLATO, *Republic* 501a; and see too *Laws* 736a-b, *Statesman* 293d and *Euthyphro* 2d-3a.

[42] PLATO*, 7th Letter*, 326a-b.

[43] See DIDYMUS col. V.52, DIELS-SCHUBART; see PLATO*, Letter* VI, 322e and ISOKRATES *Ep*., VII.135 for some examples and see too WERNER JAEGER, *Aristoteles: Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung,* Berlin 1923, 114-115.

world.[44] Their interests and activities, along with Plato's, point to a practical agenda above and beyond purely theoretical research.

It is the case that much of the Academy's reported political activity hinges on the validity of Plato's letters—especially the *5th*, in which he introduced his student Euphraeus of Oreus to Perdiccas III of Macedon, the *6th*, in which he recommends two of his pupils to King Hermeias of Atarneos, and the famous *7th* letter to the Dionian party that temporarily ruled Syracuse. There is no indication that the authorship of these letters was regarded with scepticism in the Classical era and this alone lends no small amount of credibility to them. It was in the 15th century AD that Ficinius condemned the *13th Letter* as spurious, followed two centuries later by Cudworth.[45] Attacks on the validity of the Platonic letters reached its climax in the 19th century as did attacks on the validity of the *Laws*, which is now almost universally considered authentic.[46] The same critics of the letters also cast doubt on the authenticity of the *Parmenides*, *Sophist*, *Cratylus* and *Philebus* for similar stylistic reasons. In more contemporary scholarship, the authenticity of these has by and large been upheld. Previous errors in their identification may have been due in part, as Morrow indicates, to a failure to appreciate "the changes which Plato's style had undergone between the *Republic* and the *Laws"*.[47] The hypersensitivity of some 19th century philologists has since given way to better critical methods that tend to embrace most if not all of the Platonic letters.[48] Morrow, who accepts all of them with the possible exception of the *1st*, says that the others agree "in thought, style, and diction" with the acknowledged works of the author, indicating that this is especially true of the *7th Letter*.[49] These points will continue to be argued amongst Platonic scholars; however, it is reasonable to proceed with the assumption that the letters (especially the key political ones such as the *5th* and *7th*) are probably valid. I will presently return to other issues concerning the *5th Letter*.

The Academy "made a name for itself in the fourth century by the lawgivers it sent to assorted Hellenic cities".[50] We have good evidence that they were highly politically active and directed in their efforts by their founder during his lifetime. Plutarch, who identified himself as a Platonist, gives a favourable account of Hellenistic Academics in positions of power. He regarded these as justly opposing the dangerous influences of the Epicureans who, as he says, "if they write in such matters at all, write on government to deter us from taking part in it".[51] Plutarch mentions the Academic Aristonymos who reformed the constitution of Arcadia, Phormio who modified the heavily oligarchic rule of the Eleans, Menedemus who was sent to the Pyrrhaeans, Eudoxus of Cnidus who legislated for his fellow Cnidians and Aristotle who advised both the Stagirites (and on whose account their destroyed town was rebuilt and repopulated) and, more importantly, the Macedonians on political matters.[52] It can be safely assumed that these philosophers benefited from Plato's connections as well as the

---

[44] GLENN A. MORROW, *Plato's Cretan City: A Historical Interpretation of* the Laws, Princeton, NJ 1960, 8-9.
[45] R. S. BLUCK, *Plato's Seventh and Eighth Letters,* Cambridge 1947, 174.
[46] See BLUCK, *Plato's Seventh and Eighth Letters*, 175-181 and GLENN A. MORROW, *Plato's Epistles,* New York 1962, 5-16, for a breakdown of the arguments and ancient corroborative evidence. All the Platonic letters are listed in the canon drawn up by Aristophanes of Byzantium (2nd BC, as we have seen) and also in the canon of Thrasyllus (1st AD). The *Laws* would probably have been cast out of the Platonic *corpus* by the same 19th century critics had not Aristotle vouched for it; see his *Rhetoric* 1415b30; and see too A. E. TAYLOR, *Plato: the Man and His Work,* London 2012, 13-14 and LEONARDO TARAN, *Academica: Plato, Phillip of Opus and the Pseudo-Platonic* Epinomis, Philadelphia, PA 1975, 128, 130, n. 543 on the authenticity of the *Laws*.
[47] MORROW, *Plato's Epistles,* 8.
[48] MORROW, *Plato's Epistles* , 10-11.
[49] MORROW, *Plato's Epistles*, 16.
[50] VATAI, *Intellectuals in Politics*, 93.
[51] PLUTARCH, *Adversus Colotem et Cyrenaics*, 1127a.
[52] PLUTARCH, *Adversus Colotem et Cyrenaics*, 1126c-d.

financial and other support of their often aristocratic families. Eudoxus of Cnidus (4th BC) was already established as a famous mathematician and philosopher and, as such, did not depend solely on the auspices of the Academy. Aristotle, while arguably somewhat more *bourgeois* than Plato (although his family owned large estates), had intimate connections with the Macedonian monarchy, as mentioned above, and readily mingled with Athenian elites along with the courts of aristocrats and autocrats.

Perhaps one of the Academy's most noteworthy reported political successes involved Hermeias the ruler of Atarneos. Hermeias had risen from the merchant class to dominate his home *polis*, allegedly purchasing a title from the Persians in order to bolster his political accomplishments.[53] He is said to have cultivated a close relationship with two of Plato's students, Erastus and Corsicus. As scholarly representatives of the famous Academy, they would have been valuable advisors as well as providing some useful 'spin' for the tyrant.[54] Plato requested that Hermeias look after his students, who were somewhat lacking in worldly experience, and that he extend to them his protection.[55] Securing from Hermeias his *aegis* over Erastus and Corsicus, themselves two leading citizens of Scepsis, also seems to have secured the protection of Scepsis itself. This allowed them to undertake whatever reforms (or experiments) on Scepsis, and later Assos, that they wished with considerable facility.

Hermeias evidently benefited from his pursuit of philosophy and its application to government as he reportedly took up geometry and dialectics and may have continued with his studies even after the novelty wore off.[56] Arius Didymus, the Augustan-era stoic philosopher, offers an account of the effect that the Academy's agents produced on Hermeias:

> Into the surrounding country he made expeditions; and he made friends of Corsicus and Erastus and Aristotle and Xenocrates; hence all these men lived with Hermeias...he listened to them...he gave them gifts...he actually changed his tyranny into a milder rule; therefore he also came to rule over the neighbouring country as far as Assos, and then, being exceedingly pleased with these same philosophers, he allotted to them the city of Assos. He accepted Aristotle most of all of them, and was very intimate with him.[57]

Hermeias was by all accounts a successful ruler, himself having studied philosophy under Plato. He was tricked by Memnon of Rhodes who had been dispatched by King Artaxerxes III of Persia, captured and brought to Susa where he died under torture as the Persians were seeking intelligence from him on Philip II of Macedon. Aristotle is said to have dedicated a statue of Hermeias at Delphi and had written a hymn in his praise. His reputed last words were that he had done nothing unworthy of philosophy.[58]

The degree of veracity represented by the above-quoted fragment is open to debate. Even so, both it and Plato's *6th Letter* serve to corroborate such momentous political involvements on the part of Academics. Some of the more ambitious members of Plato's mostly aristocratic Academy, we are told, even tried to establish themselves in the roles of tyrants. Some evidently succeeded. Clearchus, who studied under both Plato and Isocrates, was regarded by the latter as the kindest, most humane and most liberal student in the

---

[53] JAEGER, *Aristoteles,*112.
[54] JAEGER, *Aristoteles*, 112-113
[55] Plato, *6th Letter,* 322e.
[56] Plato, *6th Letter*, 322d, unlike the tyrants of Syracuse.
[57] Jaeger's translation and restoration in *Aristoteles* (1923), 114-15. From DIDYMUS col. 5.52, DIELS-SCHUBART.
[58] ANTON–HERMANN CHROUST, "Aristotle's Sojourn in Assos", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* (Franz Steiner Verlag) 21.2 (April–June 1972), 170–176; see too the *Suda*, *s.v.* Hermeias.

school.[59] This future tyrant was sponsored for Athenian citizenship by Timotheus in 375 BC, and in 362 Clearchus named his son after that famous general.[60] However, after gaining his tyranny, Clearchus allegedly earned the disfavour of the Academy, as well as that of the Platonist philosopher Chion of Heraclea, through his harsh policies and his abusive treatment of local aristocrats. With the help of some of the city's nobles, Chion facilitated Clearchus' assassination in 353.[61]

Other Academics purportedly sought their own crowns. Timolaus of Cyzicus is said to have followed in the pattern of Clearchus, revealing a different personality once he had assumed power. We are told that he went from being a benevolent distributor of free grain and money to suddenly overthrowing Cyzicus' constitution and instituting a tyrannical regime.[62] Euaeon of Lampascus was another Academic who allegedly attempted a similar rise to power. His tactics involved loaning money to his native city and, as Athenaeus' source indicates, "taking as surety the *acropolis* which he retained with the design of becoming tyrant, until the people of Lampascus combined to resist him; and after repaying his money they threw him out".[63] Most of these accounts come from Athenaeus' book 11 and are likely to entail elements of slander derived from Plato's detractors.

The Academic Chaeron of Pellene was supposedly even more extreme than Clearchus or Timolaus, according to this narrative of dystopian Academics in Athenaeus. As tyrant, he allegedly banished all of the male nobility, redistributed their land to their slaves and forced all of the aristocratic women to marry the newly freed and propertied slaves in a kind of parody of the dispensation in the *Republic*. This seems rather unlikely and probably represents Athenaeus' sources' attempts at maligning the Academy with embellished half-truths and exaggerations. In what must be a kind of fossilised echo of Herodicus and/or Theopompus, his interlocutors seem to be sneering when they say that "these were the beneficial results he derived from the noble *Republic* and from the lawless *Laws*!"[64] Even so, Timolaus of Cyzicus, Euaeon of Lampascus and Chaeron of Pellene were all three used by Sophocles of Sunion's legalist, Democharis, as exhibits to justify the ban on philosophers at Athens in 307/6, suggesting that these accounts were not entirely fictionalised. Burkert has described Plato's Academy as a kind of "cult organisation", arguing that there is no inconsistency between this and its political activities.[65] Chroust, after giving a list of Plato's disciples and associates, even concludes that "one could justly refer to the Platonic Academy as the 'seedbed' of political tyrants".[66] But should one conclude such a thing? As we have seen, political opponents of the Academy desired to spread just such views and they were clearly aimed at defaming the institution and its founder. It can only be said with certainty that the Academy was well connected to the political landscape of ancient Greece from its inception. Much more could be said about its other potential political dealings but will be omitted here for want of space and time. We may assume that its aims were more benevolent, despite perhaps some of the actual results and criticisms, than malign.

---

[59] ISOCRATES, *Epistle* 7.135.
[60] See DEMOSTHENES, 20.84; on his son's name see VATAI, *Intellectuals in Politics,* 88, n. 158.
[61] MEMNON, *History of Heracleia* 1 = JACOBY *FGrH* 434; see too JUSTIN, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 16.5.
[62] ATHENAEUS, 11.509 ff.
[63] ATHENAEUS, 11.508 ff.
[64] ATHENAEUS, 11.509 ff.; see too PAUSANIAS, 7.27.2; Athenaeus 11.508d-509b. Both Chaeron and Timolaus appear to have received Macedonian assistance.
[65] WALTER BURKERT, EDWIN L. MINAR JR. (trans.), *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, Cambridge, MS 1972, 119, esp. n. 62 and n. 63
[66] A. H. CHROUST, "A Second (and Closer) Look at Plato's Philosophy", *Archiv für Staatswissenschaften und Geschichte* 48 (1962), 575-597, 586.

It bears emphasising that we cannot know for certain if most or all of the negativity found in the descriptions of politically minded Academics is the direct result of smear campaigns by the likes of Herodicus, Theopompus and Isocrates; but, we can assume that no small part of it is. These accounts do at least demonstrate that Academics were being sent to exercise political influence abroad, whatever their reception through later, revisionist interpretations. The precedent of philosophers meddling in political affairs had, of course, been around well before Plato's time with not the least being his famous ancestor, Solon of Athens. The Pythagoreans in particular illustrate this preoccupation with real-world politics and it would continue long after Plato's era with the Stoics, Cynics, Epicureans and others making connections with, and wielding influence over, various states and statesmen.[67] The motivation for Plato to be interested in the affairs Macedon (the rising star of the age) and to be able to exert some influence over them, albeit by proxy, is therefore highly plausible. The numerous examples of politically-minded, 'meddling' Academics also goes a long way towards showing that Plato had the means necessary at his disposal to influence Perdiccas III in favouring Philip. It does not however adequately demonstrate that he had the opportunity to do so.

Leaving aside for the moment the alleged actions of Euphraeus of Oreus, how might Philip have come onto Plato's "radar", so to speak? Could Plato have heard of, corresponded with or encountered Philip whilst he was in Thebes? The future leader of the Macedonian superpower had been held as a guest/hostage in Thebes during his youth, from about the ages of fourteen to eighteen (c. 368–364 BC). It was common practice for a leading power to retain children of the aristocracies of lesser *poleis* in order to insure their compliance. While there, Philip received a military and diplomatic education from Epaminondas, the Theban supreme commander who had been the hero of Leuctra in 371. Ptolemy of Alorus, regent for Perdiccas III, the lover and later husband of Eurydicê, widow of Amyntas III, probably sent Philip to Thebes. This is based on Aeschines (*False Embassy*, 26 ff.), who places Philip at the court of Ptolemy when he succeeded to the regency following the death of Alexander II (in 369).[68] Philip's adoption of the "oblique order of battle" from Epaminondas is probably the most striking result of his time in Thebes.[69] We are told that Philip became the *eromenos* of Pelopidas, another Theban general and lived with one Pammenes, who was reputedly an enthusiast of the Sacred Band of Thebes, which Philip later honoured with a monument after defeating them at Chaeronea.[70] On this we have Dio Chrysostom's (c. AD 40 – c. 115) account amongst others:

> And yet previously Philip himself, while a hostage at Thebes, not only was associated with Pelopidas, a man of cultivation — in consequence of which it was even said that Pelopidas had been his lover — but he also witnessed the

[67] See K. R. MOORE, "Persaeus of Citium: A lapsed stoic?", *Rosetta: Papers of The Institutute of Archaeology and Aniquity* 7 (2009), 1-21 for one notable example of a politically minded Stoic philosopher; on the Pythagoreans and their political meddling see K. R. MOORE, "Was Pythagoras ever really in Sparta?", *Rosetta: Papers of The Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity* 6 (2009), 1-25; for the alleged Pythagorean influence on Croton and Taras see IAMBLICHUS, *De vita Pythagorica* 25. In both places, the Pythagorean communities supposedly held close relations with the oligarchic governments of these *poleis*. Similar stories are told of Lycurgus' travels to Crete and Ionia in search of the best laws for Sparta (PLUTARCH, *Life of Lycurgus* 4).
[68] JULIUS BELOCH, *Griechische Geschichte,* Strassburg 1912, 3.1.182, note; R. COHEN and G. GLOTZ, *Histoir Grecque*, Paris 1929, 3.1.182; and see too "Philip II of Macedon", in PAULY-WISSOWA-KROLL-MITTELHAUS, *Real Encyclopädie der classischen Alternumswissenschaft,* Stuttgart 1893, 19.2266.
[69] ULLRICH WILCKEN, G.C. RICHARDS (trans.), *Alexander the Great*, London and New York 1967, 30.
[70] See STEPHEN O. MURRAY, *Homosexualities,* Chicago 2000, 42.

> deeds of Epaminondas and listened to his words; and it was no mere accident that Epaminondas had acquired such power amongst the Greeks and had wrought so great a change in Greece as to overthrow the Spartans, despite their long-continued rule, but because he had conversed with Lysis, the disciple of Pythagoras. This, I fancy, explains why Philip was far superior to those who previously had become kings of Macedonia.[71]

In *ca.* 364 BC, Philip returned home which is also about the same time that Euphraeus seems to have made his appearance at the Macedonian court.[72] Could Plato have developed an interest in Philip on account of some connection with the Pythagorean Lysis?

Plutarch's *De Genio Socratis* (584b) shows that Lysis died shortly before the Theban victory over the Spartans at Leuctra in 371. Also, according to Plutarch, Philip was a hostage in the house of Pammenes and not in the house of Epaminondas' father, Polymnus, with whom Lysis had been associated.[73] Certainly Epaminondas was no longer Lysis' student when Philip was a "guest" in Thebes; the philosopher was dead and Epaminondas had already won the battle of Leuctra by that point. Even so, Diodorus Siculus indicates that:

> Philip, who was reared along with him, acquired a wide acquaintance with the Pythagorean philosophy. Inasmuch as both students showed natural ability and diligence they proved to be superior in deeds of valour. Of the two, Epaminondas underwent the most rigorous tests and battles, and invested his fatherland almost miraculously with the leadership of Hellas, while Philip, availing himself of the same initial training, achieved no less fame than Epaminondas.[74]

Lysis of Taras was not the only Pythagorean in Thebes and Diogenes Laërtius mentions others from Croton, already on hand, with whom Lysis would have been acquainted.[75] A Pythagorean presence at Thebes is plainly attested, especially associated with the household of Epaminondas' father, and they would definitely have still been present when Philip was there. If Philip truly did have some education in Pythagorean philosophy, albeit not at the hands of Lysis nor whilst Epaminondas was a student and, moreover if he showed some actual interest in it, then it is possible that word might have reached the Academy. Plato, of course, had connections with Pythagoreans from Taras, not the least of which being his friend Archytas (428–347 BC) who had facilitated his escape from Syracuse, as detailed in the *7th Letter*. One of the Pythagorean philosophers mentioned in Plutarch as part of the contingent in Thebes, Simmias, appears as a character in Plato's *Crito* (and in several other dialogues),

---

[71] *Dionis Prusaensis quem vocant Chrysostomum quae exstant omnia*, Vols I and II. DIO CHRYSOSTOM, J. DE ARNIM (ed.), *Orationes,* Berlin 1893, 49.5; this account is reiterated by PAUSANIAS, *Pausanias' Description of Greece with an English Translation by W.H.S. JONES, LITT.D., and H.A. ORMEROD, M.A., in 4 Volumes*, Cambridge, MA & London 1918, 9.13 and also by Aelian, RUDOLF HERCHER (ed.), *Claudii Aeliani de natura animalium libri xvii, varia historia, epistolae, fragmenta*, Vol 2, Leipzig 1866, 3.17. See too DIODORUS SICULUS, *Exc. de Virt. et Vit.* 556; PLUTARCH, *de Gen. Socr.* 8, 13, 14, 16; DIOGENES LAËRTIUS, 8.39; Cornelius Nepos, *Epam.* 2; Iamblichus, *Vit. Pyth.* 35.

[72] ANSON, *Alexander the Great*, 49 gives 364 BC as the probable date for Philip's homecoming based on his reading of JUSTIN, 7.5.3.

[73] PLUTARCH, *Life of Pelopidas*, 26.5; see too Books 15.94.2 and 16.34.1-2; and see NEPOS, *Epaminondas*, 1.1 and 2.2.

[74] DIODORUS SICULUS, in IMMANEL BEKKER, LUDWIG DINDORF, FRIEDRICH VOGEL, KURT THEODOR FISCHER (eds.), *Diodori Bibliotheca Historica, Vol 4-5*, Leipzig 1903-1906, 16.2.

[75] PLUTARCH, *de Genio Socratis,* in *Plutarch's Morals*, *translated from the Greek by several hands. Corrected and revised by WILLIAM W. GOODWIN, PhD Boston*, *Little, Brown, and Company*, Cambridge 1874, 13.506 ff.

along with another Pythagorean names Cebes, offering to financially support Socrates if he would be willing to escape to Megara or Thebes.[76] In fact, these two city-states were "strongholds politically and philosophically of the Pythagorean brotherhood" who had fled there after being run out of Italy.[77] Any Pythagoreans present would have likely taken note of a princeling from Macedon who showed interest in, and aptitude for, their teachings. Granted, in the absence of any definitive textual evidence specifically stating that the Pythagoreans in Thebes recommended Philip, the links here are hypothetical possibilities at best. Even so, the Pythagorean connection remains an interesting opportunity for Philip's "introduction" to Plato.

While it is difficult to pin down a precise connection between the Macedonian prince and the Athenian philosopher prior to Euphraeus, there does seem to have been a clear enough interest on Plato's part in the affairs of Macedon. But here too there is controversy. As we have seen, the *5th Letter* purports to send Euphraeus of Oreus to Perdiccas III. The author states that he recommends Euphraeus to the newly crowned monarch "for the man is useful for many things, the most important being that in which you yourself are deficient owing to your youth, and also because it is a matter about which there are not many counsellors available for the young".[78] The letter goes on to reference a number of points found in Plato's teachings, specifically from the *7th Letter*, the *Republic* and the *Laws*.[79] There can be no doubt that the *5th Letter* is Platonic; but, did Plato himself write it? Bury observes that the discussion of the "voices" of various regimes is borrowed directly from the *Republic* and that the explanation of when it is beneficial to give counsel seems derived from the *7th Letter*. He argues that it seems as if the author had these works before him and was consciously trying to make the letter seem authentic rather than Plato, as the genuine author, merely being consistent with his own ideas.[80] Post also considered it spurious for similar reasons.[81] Hamilton and Cairns, while not defending its authenticity themselves, noted that others have defended it (without naming them) and offer perhaps a more even-handed view.[82] The debate over this is ongoing. Willamowitz believed that the letter was not a genuine work of Plato's but was written by Speussipus or one of his students.[83] Momigliano disputed this and argued that the letter's validity was unobjectionable on grounds of style.[84] However, Neumann and Kerchensteiner rejected it on internal grounds.[85] Griffith, following Hackforth, also argued it was spurious for similar reasons.[86] A.E. Taylor, in turn, dismissed Hackforth's objections as "trivial" and argued, in agreement with Momigliano, that its

---

[76] PLATO, *Crito*, 45b; and see too *Phaedrus* 242b; *8th Letter* 363a; *Phaedo*, 86a, 92a7-95a6.
[77] VATAI, *Intellectuals in Politics,* 70-71.
[78] PLATO, *5th Letter*, in JOHN BURNET (ed.), *Platonis Opera*, Oxford 1903, 321c.
[79] PLATO, *Laws* 7.321d3, on forms of government, references *Republic*, 493a-c; 322b, discussing giving council to statesmen, references *Laws* 7.325a, *Laws* 7.325c ff.; and, for a theory of "counsel," *Laws* 7.330c ff.
[80] R. G. BURY (ed.), *Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA 1942, *Epistle V*, 449.
[81] L. A. POST (ed.), *Thirteen Epistles of Plato,* Oxford 1925.
[82] EDITH HAMILTON and HUNTINGTON CAIRNS (eds.), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, Princeton 1989, 1516.
[83] ULRICH VON WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, *Platon Zweiter Band Beilagen Und Textkritik Zweite Auflage*, Berlin 1920, 280; and see ULRICH VON WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, *Platon I - Sein Leben und Seine Werke,* Berlin 1929, 576, n. 1
[84] ARNALDO MOMIGLIANO, *Filippo il Macedone*: *Saggio sulla storia greca del IV secolo a. C.,* Florence 1934, 36, n.1
[85] W. NEUMANN and J. KERCHENSTEINER, *Platon: Briefe,* München 1967, 180.
[86] N.G.L. HAMMOND and G.T. GRIFFITH, *A History of Macedonia, volume II 550-336 BC,* Oxford 1979, 207, n.2; R. HACKFORTH, *The Authorship of the Platonic Epistles,* Manchester 1913.

language and content seemed consistent with the other, accepted works of Plato. Harward and Natoli reached the same conclusion.[87]

While I maintain that the *5th Letter* was probably genuine, the apparently direct references to the *Laws* within it could potentially be problematic. Perdiccas III ascended the throne in 368. The *Laws* was probably composed during the last twenty years of Plato's life (his death is given as *ca*. 348/7 BC) and, as such, it is generally regarded as his final philosophical treatise.[88] It is thought to have been written in the 350s and early 340s; although, as Saunders indicates, "some passages may conceivably be earlier".[89] The apparent references to the *Laws* in the *5th Letter* could be anachronistic, given the dates, but we do not know when precisely Plato was composing that treatise and, as Saunders suggests, he may well have already been drafting parts of it in the 360s. Bury, Post and others may also have been basing their judgement of the *5th Letter* in no small part on the now outmoded assumption that the *Laws* was spurious. This view has been dismissed for sound textual and epistemological reasons and, as such, can no longer be employed to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the *5th Letter*.[90] The authenticity of this epistle has certainly been questioned and fervently contested; but, whether Plato or one of his contemporaries or successors wrote it, "the presence of Euphraeus at the court of Perdiccas III is not in dispute".[91]

Perdiccas III was king of Macedon from 368 to 359 BC, succeeding his brother Alexander II.[92] He was the son of Amyntas III and Eurydicê, and he was underage when Alexander II was killed by Ptolemy of Alorus, who then either ruled as regent (*epitropos*, "guardian") according to Plutarch and Aeschines or, according to Diodorus Siculus and Eusebius, as monarch with Perdiccas as the first-tier heir.[93] Anson argues that Ptolemy of Alorus was a true regent, unlike Philip II with Amyntas Perdicca, and that Perdiccas III was technically king from 368.[94] Anson makes this argument using a range of points but, perhaps most conspicuously, Ptolemy's name is frequently rendered in the demotic form ("of Alorus") in the surviving texts whereas the tradition with Macedonian monarchs was to simply use their given name. In 365 BC, Perdiccas slew Ptolemy and assumed the sole government. He also served as *theorodokos* in the Epidaurian Panhellenic games about that same time which no doubt boosted his popularity.[95] Of the reign of Perdiccas III, we have relatively little information. He engaged in hostilities with Athens

---

[87] J. HARWARD, *The Platonic Epistles,* Cambridge 1932, 183-185; NATOLI, *The Letter of Speussipus to Philip II*, 32.

[88] The *Minos* is probably later than the *Laws*. So is the *Epinomis* but these two dialogues, although clearly inspired by Platonic thought, are generally considered to be works of other hands.

[89] TREVOR J. SAUNDERS (trans. and ed.), *Plato: The Laws,* Harmondsworth, Middlesex 1970, 26.

[90] See K. R. MOORE, *Sex and the Second Best City: Sex and Society in the* Laws *of Plato,* London 2005, chapter 2, *et passim*.

[91] NATOLI, *The Letter of Speussipus to Philip II*, 32 n. 66.

[92] DEBORAH NAILS, *The People of Plato: A Prosopography of People and Other Socratics,* Indianapolis, IN & Cambridge 2002, 223*, s.v.* Perdiccas III.

[93] AESCHINES, *On the Embassy* in *Aeschines with an English translation by Charles Darwin Adams, Ph.D*., Cambridge, MA & London 1919, 2.29 and PLUTARCH, *Life of Pelopidas* in *Plutarch's Lives with an English Translation by Bernadotte Perrin*, Vol. 5, Cambridge, MA & London 1917, 27.3 make Ptolemy of Alorus as regent; DIODORUS SICULUS, in IMMANEL BEKKER, LUDWIG DINDORF, FRIEDRICH VOGEL, KURT THEODOR FISCHER (eds.) *Diodori Bibliotheca Historica*, Vol 4-5, Leipzig 1903-1906, 15.71.1, 77.5 and EUSEBIUS, *Chronicon bipartitum, ex Arm. textu in Lat. conversum, adnotationibus auctum, Gr. fragmentis exornatum, opera J.B. Aucher* 1818, 228 make him a king in his own right.

[94] EDWARD ANSON, "Philip II, Amyntas Perdicca, and Macedonian Royal Succession", *Historia* 58 (2009), 276-286.

[95] THEOCRITUS, *Dioscuri* (*Idyll* 22) in J. M. EDMONDS (ed.), *Greek Bucolic Poets: Theocritus. Bion. Moschus (Loeb Classical Library No. 28)*, Harvard, MA 1912.

over Amphipolis and tried to reconquer upper Macedonia from the Illyrian Bardylis, but the expedition ended in disaster and the king was killed in battle.[96]

Perdiccas III was also distinguished for his patronage of scholars and appears to have had a sincere interest in philosophy. Amongst the notables whose company he cultivated, as we have seen, was Euphraeus of Oreus who rose to so high a position of favour as to exert considerable influence over the young king. He seems to have excluded from his society all but his own hand-picked philosophers. Carystius description of Euphraeus' tenure with Perdiccas is a somewhat comical portrait but it probably also entails some elements of truth. He writes:

> Euphraeus for example, when staying at the court of King Perdiccas in Macedonia, lorded it as regally as the king himself, though he was of low origin and given to slanderous speech; he was so pedantic in his selection of the king's associates that nobody could share in the common mess if he did not know how to practise geometry or philosophy.[97]

Carystius attributes Euphraeus' downfall, following the ascension of Philip II, to the enmity that his domineering behaviour had aroused. Demosthenes favourably notes in his *3rd Philippic* that Euphraeus once resided in Athens and portrays him as being active in politics, albeit in opposition to Philip II, toward the end of his life.[98] After Euphraeus returned to his hometown following the king's coronation, Philip II is reputed to have bribed agents in Oreus to bring the *polis* under Macedonian control. This would be highly consistent with his expansionistic policies. Euphraeus took active measures to oppose these efforts and was thrown into prison where he probably committed suicide, after Philip was fully in charge and when his opponents in Oreus were being hunted down and executed, and thereby earned Demonsthenes' praise.[99] If, while in the service of Perdiccas III, Euphraeus was as officious as the sources suggest, then it is perfectly plausible to imagine him urging the alleged apportionment of territory to Philip if the latter had in fact aroused Plato's interests, perhaps by way of the Pythagoreans. It is, of course, possible that he was packed off to govern his distant province simply in order to get him out of Euphraeus' way.

There was precedent for Macedonian princes and heirs-apparent to be apportioned their own subordinate principalities. Two of Alexander I's sons, Philip and Alcetas were reportedly given their own areas to govern.[100] However, Euphraeus' encouragement to let Philip have his own region appears to have transpired in order to prevent that political situation which Plato most despised: civil war. Philip and Perdiccas quarrelled and Euphraeus' decision may have been a pre-emptive act designed to remedy a political crisis.[101] "It was only by giving the ambitious Philip a share of real power," writes Natoli, "that Euphraeus felt he could avert a potentially disastrous challenge to Perdiccas and the ruin of the experiment he had begun in the practical application of philosophical principles".[102] As with Plato's failed attempts at influencing Syracuse, there was resentment building at the Macedonian court amongst the nobles over the power being wielded by the Academy's

---

[96] See CLAUDE ORRIEUX and PAULINE SCHMITT-PANTEL, *A History of Ancient Greece,* London 1999, 256.
[97] ATHENAEUS, *Deipnosophistae*, 11.508d–e.
[98] DEMOSTHENES, *Third Philippic*, in *Demosthenes with an English translation by J. H. Vince, M.A.* Cambridge, MA & London 1930, 59–62.
[99] NAILS, *The People of Plato*, 148, *s.v*. Euphraeus.
[100] On Philip, see THYCYDIDES 2.100.3; on Alcetas, PLATO, *Gorgias* 417b, though this example is more open to debate.
[101] NATOLI, *The Letter of Speussipus to Philip II*, 12 and see too the *31st Socratic Letter*.
[102] NATOLI, *The Letter of Speussipus to Philip II*, 36.

representative. A campaign of slander and innuendo got underway in Macedon, no doubt urged by disgruntled nobles, with the likes of Theopompus and Isocrates maligning the Academy, not that they needed much encouragement.[103] Philip perhaps had mixed feelings over his appointment to govern distant areas of the kingdom whilst concurrently suffering a diminished influence at court in favour of a meddling philosopher whose agenda might have been regarded by a military mind with no small degree of scepticism. He could have regarded his "promotion" as being, in actuality, a hindrance to his progress. And he might well have resented it.

Yet there is some indication of surprise in the sources that Philip would be at odds with Plato. According to Speusippus, Plato had sought to promote good relations between Philip and his brother, had "always been most concerned should anything uncivilised or unbrotherly occur at court", and was also in no small part responsible for Philip becoming king.[104] Of course, in the *Deipnosophistae* we are also told that Speusippus wrote to Philip precisely because he had heard that the latter was slandering Plato.[105] Athenaeus then details the apportionment of territory which led to Philip's premiership as an explanation for why that monarch should be grateful to the philosopher. Athenaeus' character Pontianus expresses disbelief in the whole story ("…whether all this is true or not, God knows!"). But if this disbelief is aimed at the fact that Philip could have slandered Plato or that Plato could have been friendly with anyone, given the rather misanthropic depictions of him later on in book 11 of the *Deipnosophistae*, is less clear. Certainly, most of the negative representations of Plato in Athenaeus come directly from his enemies. It is fair to say that Philip II's relationship with Plato was complex and it became so embroiled in the conflicts between philosophical schools, and their subsequent spin, that it is difficult to form a clear impression of what actually happened.[106]

While I have been largely concerned with the influence that Plato exerted over Macedon, there is evidence of reciprocity here as well that bears some mention. The royal tombs at Agai (Vergina), dated approximately around the reign of Philip II, "constructed of a barrel-vaulted roof of cut stone", are strikingly similar to the proposed tombs of priests and heroes in Plato's *Laws*.[107] There, the Athenian Stranger describes them as follows:

> Their tomb shall be constructed underground, in the form of an oblong vault of spongy stone, as long-lasting as possible, and fitted with couches of stone set side by side; when they have laid him who is gone to his rest in this, they shall make a mound in a circle round it and plant thereon a grove of trees, save only at one extremity, so that at that point the tomb may for all time admit of enlargement, in case there be need of additional mounds for the buried.[108]

Lehmann maintains that Plato was describing a corbel-vaulted tomb whose construction was known and employed in the Greek world from the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic. She

---

[103] On the events in Sicily, see PLATO, *7th Letter*, 329d-330b, 338e, 344e-345a; PLUTARCH, *Dionysius* 14.1-2; NEPOS, *Dion* 3.
[104] NATOLI, *Letter of Speusippus to Philip II*, 12-13.
[105] ATHENAEUS, *Deipnosophistae* 506e = F1 *FHG* 4.356.
[106] L. BERTELLI, "La lettera di Speusippo a Filippo: il problema dell 'autenticità'", *Atti Accademia Scienze e Lettere di Toreno. Classe di Lettere* 111 (1977), 75-111, 100, has posited that Carystius and Diogenes Laërtius erroneously transferred Theopompus' negative views of Plato and the Academy to Philip because they confused the opinions expressed by Theopompus, in a letter that he wrote to Philip, with those held by the latter.
[107] FREDRICKSMEYER, "Once More the Diadem and Barrel-Vault at Vergina", 99-100.
[108] PLATO, Laws 947d-e.

adduces as closest parallel a fourth century underground rectangular stone corbel-vaulted tomb at Kul Oba near Kerch (Panticapaeum-Kerch).[109] However, Kul Oba lay on the distant Cimmerian Bosporus, and there is no evidence that Plato had any personal connections with that far-flung locality. Moreover, the discovery of the "Eurydice tomb" at Aigai, securely dated to *ca*. 340 BC, "vindicates Plato's description" and demonstrates that the Macedonian tomb, albeit developed through a fusion of Greek traditions (from the Mycenaean *tholos* onwards) and Eastern influences (relations with Persia beginning in the 6th century BC), was not solely the result of Alexander's campaigns.[110] As it happens, the Athenian philosopher may have played an even bigger role in this development beyond just describing it in his *Laws*.

We know, of course, that Plato did have personal connections with the court at Macedon, even if only through Euphraeus and Aristotle.[111] The latter no doubt was and continued to be well-informed of developments there on account of his association with the royal family. He would almost certainly have been aware of the introduction of vaulted tombs. Such a tomb provided a "closer parallel, and a more likely inspiration, for Plato's conception of his Priestly Tomb" in the *Laws* than the corbelled ones on the Cimmerian Bosporus.[112] Hammond concludes that Plato "derived the idea presumably not from the Greek city-state, where it was unknown, but from Macedon, where his disciple, Euphraeus, lived for a time in the 360s at the court of Perdiccas III".[113] Andronikos is more specific:

> [Plato's] text, written before 348 B.C. (the year of Plato's death), could not be clearer. Not only was Plato familiar with the form of the vaulted Macedonian tomb, but also had precise knowledge of certain characteristic details: (a) Construction with 'spongy stones' which are none other than the porous stones which constitute the building material of all Macedonian tombs. (b) The existence of the couch within the tomb is a distinctive Macedonian custom. (c) The building of a *tumulus* planted with trees, except at the place where there is the *dromos* of the entrance which was to facilitate later burials which, we must accept, were made in Macedonian tombs.[114]

The similarity between actual Macedonian tombs and Plato's description in the *Laws* appears more than coincidental.

More recent archaeological discoveries have pointed to a potentially even greater Platonic connection with Macedonian monumental architecture through the realm of mathematics and geometry. It has been discovered that the Pythagorean golden triangle, with a ratio of 3:4:5, is incorporated into the plan of Philip II's palace at Aigai. This ratio played a crucial role in its architect's calculations. From the centre of the peristyle, the sequence of

---

[109] P.W. LEHMANN, "The So-Called Tomb of Philip II: an Addendum", *American Journal of Archaeology* 86 (1982), 437-442.

[110] C. SAATSOGLOU-PALIADELI, "The Arts of Virgina-Aegae, the Cradle of the Macedonian Kingdom" in ROBIN LANE FOX (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Ancient Macedon: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Macedon, 540 BC-300 AD,* Leiden & Boston 2011, 271-296, 288-289.

[111] They also include Python of Aenus, Delius, Phocion and Leon of Byzantium; see NATOLI, *The Letter of Speussipus to Philip II*, 39-42.

[112] FREDRICKSMEYER, "Once More the Diadem and Barrel-Vault at Vergina", 101-102.

[113] N.G.L. HAMMOND, "The Evidence for the Identity of the Royal Tombs at Vergina" in W.L. ADAMS and E.N. BORZA (eds.), *Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage,* Washington, D.C 1982, 117-118, 115.

[114] M. ANDRONIKOS, "The Royal Tomb at Vergina and the Problem of the Dead", *Analekta Ex Athenon* (*Athens Annals of Archaeology*) 13 (1980), 168-78, 175.

Platonic numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 8 and 27[115] correspond to the sequence of inscribed and circumscribed canonical shapes which define the plan of the building. The number φ, the *golden ratio* ($\frac{1+\sqrt{5}}{2} \approx 1.6180339887498948482045868343...$), known as the ratio of beauty or the "divine proportion", is the common denominator that runs throughout the entire structure. The ratio of 1.6 delineates the relations between the height of the storeys and the arrangement of spaces as well as all other elements including the heights of different columns, triglyphs, metopes and the undercuts of the threshold. It is remarkable, and clearly not accidental, that even "the smallest detail obeys the harmony from the world of Pythagoras and conforms to the golden rule that marks the presence of God in the Platonic universe".[116] These, along with the other architectural matters discussed above, strongly suggest that influence ran both ways.[117] Plato's tomb of priests and heroes in the *Laws* could even be read as a kind of literary monument to Macedon, if not to Philip himself, as much as the Macedonians' insistence on Platonic geometry in their architecture could also be regarded as a credit to the Athenian philosopher. However, unequivocal proof remains elusive and the above-mentioned references to Philip II's interest in Pythagoreanism may point more to the origins of these mathematical influences rather than to Plato alone; although, it is tempting to perceive a connection here.

That Philip II might have also expressed some positive sentiment towards Plato, despite their apparent differences, is attested in another kind of monument. According to a fragment of Theopompus quoted in Diogenes Laërtius, when Plato died in the 13th year of Philip II's reign, we are told that "the king paid honours to him".[118] Aelian's *Varia Historia* also indicates "honours" given by Philip to Plato on his death.[119] The precise nature of these reported "honours" is unclear. It could have been an actual monument or statue which does not survive (or is yet to be identified) or it could have been some kind of public proclamation. Apart from perhaps expressing some approval for his teachings, the gesture may have been designed, as Worthington suggests, "to curry favor with the Athenians as he was then seeking a diplomatic resolution to their war with him".[120] Some have even interpreted Theopompus' account to mean that Philip II was himself present at Plato's funeral.[121] This seems unlikely but perhaps should not be altogether dismissed.

Yet it is somewhat troubling that this report of Philip honouring Plato should come from such a source as Theopompus. And the passage itself is problematic. The Loeb edition of Diogenes Laërtius' *Lives* points out the "awkwardness" of the last clause of the sentence ("…according to Theopompus honours were paid to him by Philip").[122] It largely hinges in

---

[115] See PLATO, *Timaeus* 35b4-c2.

[116] A. KOTTARIDI, "The Palace at Aigae", in FOX (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Ancient Macedon*, 297-334, 331-332.

[117] Robin Lane Fox, with whom I discussed this at a conference in Wroclaw in 2014, is sceptical about Plato's influence on Philip II's kingship, but he admits that the Pythagorean connection is highly suggestive and I am grateful to him for pointing out some of the most recent scholarship on the subject.

[118] DIOGENES LAËRTIUS, *Plato* 3.40; see FAVORINUS, *Memorabilia* III—quoting Theopompus (JACOBY *FGrHist* 115 F294).

[119] AELIAN, in RUDOLF HERCHER (ed.), *Varia Historia* in *Claudii Aeliani de natura animalium* libri xvii, *varia historia*, *epistolae*, *fragmenta*, Leipzig 1866, 4.19.

[120] WORTHINGTON, *By the Spear,* 69.

[121] See ANNA NTINTI, "The Death(s) of Plato" in ANNETTE MERZ and TEUN TIELEMAN (eds.), *The letter of Mara bar Sarapion in context: proceedings of the symposium held at Utrecht University, 10-12 December 2009*, Leiden/Boston 2012, 183-192, 185 ff.

[122] DIOGENES LAËRTIUS, in R.D. HICKS (ed.), *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. Cambridge, MA 1972, 312, n. c; citing HERODOTUS 6.39 as a precedent: *huph ou kai epitimēthēnai phēsin auton Theopompos*; see K.G. BOEHNECKE, *Demosthenes, Lycurgos, Hypereides und ihr Zeitalter*, Bd. 1. Berlin 1864, 451 and WILAMOWITZ *Leben*, 571.

the meaning of *epitimaō* (in the aorist passive infinitive *epitimēthēnai*, as a deponent) which can mean both "to honour" and "to censure" depending on context.[123] The term is variously used with either meaning in Herodotus and Demosthenes. Natoli has argued, citing a range of philological sources, that "the fact that Diogenes cited Theopompus as his authority makes it likely that the reference is to the censure of Plato" and not to offer any kind of praise.[124] However, it is worth noting that *epitimaō* usually (but not universally) takes the dative when it means "to censure" and the accusative when it means "to honour"; in the extract from Diogenes Laërtius, it has an accusative object (*auton*).[125] The meaning of this passage remains contested.

We should also take into account the volatile and sometimes ambiguous nature of its author. Theopompus had made some negative comments about the court of Philip II of Macedon, as well as praising the king at other times. He scandalously reported that men would mount each other in sexual congress, "though they had beards", for the king's amusement.[126] It is noteworthy that Theopompus likely held some pro-Spartan inclinations (for which his father had been earlier exiled) and possibly sought to slander Philip and Macedon on that account.[127] Theopompus is also known for his fondness for sensational and incredible stories. And he might have made the statement about honours paid to Plato by Philip as a means of casting aspersions against both philosopher and king as objects of equal contempt—especially since he too had been passed over as a potential tutor for Alexander. This does not necessarily verify the claim of honours paid by Philip to Plato but could be seen to bolster it. Aelian conspicuously did *not* cite Theopompus as his source for Plato's honours, although he is known to have used him extensively elsewhere.[128]

There is another possibility. Aristotle is said to have established an altar of *Philîa* in honour of Plato after his death and one could speculate that he paid for it with money obtained from Philip—whether as part of his *honorarium* or gifted for that specific purpose.[129] If Plato helped Philip attain his throne in an indirect and not unproblematic manner, possibly then Philip chose to honour Plato similarly, by proxy, through Aristotle. This altar of *Philîa* may be the very "honours" to which our sources are referring, depending on when and if it was established by Aristotle. However, there is considerable uncertainty over whether this was an actual altar or a metaphorical one, existing only in poetry. The account comes from Olympiodorus (*Carmina*, frag. 2), the 5th-6th century AD Neo-Platonist. He tells us that Aristotle dedicated some poetic lines to one Eudemus (otherwise unknown) at the altar of Friendship and that in so doing he was praising Plato.[130] Jaeger's interpretation is that the dedication "To Friendship" was aimed at the Platonic ideal of *philîa*, with Plato as the implied object of devotion.[131] Wilamowitz goes further, arguing that the altar was dedicated to Plato himself.[132] Düring asserts that Aristotle set up the altar and then wrote the

---

[123] HENRY GEORGE LIDDELL and ROBERT SCOTT, revised and edited by SIR HENRY STUART JONES, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edition, Oxford 1994, *sv. epitimaō.* (*LSJ*)
[124] NATOLI, *The Letter of Speussipus to Philip II*, 38, n. 87.
[125] *LSJ sv. epitimaō* and see too HERBERT WEIR SMYTH, *Greek Grammar*, Harvard, MA 1984, 1471.
[126] THEOPOMPUS, fr. 225a, see T. K. HUBBARD (ed.), *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook of Basic Documents*, Berkeley, CA 2003, 74.
[127] ROBIN LANE FOX, *Alexander the Great*, New York 2004, 49, 57 *et passim*.
[128] See HENRY DICKINSON WESTLAKE, *Essays on the Greek Historians and Greek History*. Manchester 1969, 239 ff.
[129] See A. S. REGINOS, *Platonica: The Anecdotes Concerning the Life and Writings of Plato*, Leiden 1976, 130, 198 and n. 40.
[130] See THOMAS GOULD, *The Ancient Quarrel Between Poetry and Philosophy,* Princeton 1990, 15.
[131] WERNER W. JAEGER, *Aristoteles*, 108; the same interpretation can be found in WERNER W. JAEGER, "Aristotle's Verses in Praise of Plato", *Classical Quarterly* 21 (1927), 13-17.
[132] ULRICH VON WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, *Aristotles und Athen*, Berlin 1893, 2.413-16.

ode about it, pretending due to poetic license that it had already been established by someone else.[133] We even have one reconstruction of the verses quoted in Olympiodorus which goes "on the grounds of august friendship, I dedicate this altar to Plato", although that translation is highly questionable.[134] But, in Ford's words, "this altar is, for us, an object made purely of discourse".[135] The evidence is too ephemeral for definitive conclusions and we are left, again, with indeterminacy alongside some tantalising prospects.

It is impossible to prove that Plato had directed Euphraeus to obtain for Prince Philip his allotment of territory. But it is fair to say that Philip would probably not have gotten it, particularly if he and his brother were quarrelling, had Euphraeus not been sent to Macedon by Plato. This likely prevented a civil war and put Philip into a position that he could then exploit when circumstances became ripe; although, as stated, neither Plato, Euphraeus nor Philip could have known that things would turn out as they did. Perhaps Philip II would have achieved supremacy without the involvement of meddling philosophers. He was a resourceful man by all accounts and had received a superb military education at Theban expense. He might have killed or exiled Perdiccas and seized the throne early, advancing his plans for conquest by several years. Alternatively, without Euphraeus' aid, Philip might not have been in a position to assume command on his brother's death and Macedon could have been torn by civil strife as various nobles vied for supremacy, condemning their kingdom to the status of a political backwater. Alexander the Great might not have been born, no one might have planned the invasion of Persia and history as we know it would have been dramatically different. Or, perhaps Alexander would have still managed to conquer the Persian Empire and beyond even if his father had not succeeded in consolidating his kingdom, absorbing much of the rest of Greece by the time of his death; although, that outcome seems less likely.

These and many other alternative histories can be imagined. But, as pure speculation, they amount to so much dust in the wind. The actual events are a matter of record, albeit contested and unclear at key points. I have sought here to demonstrate that Plato had the motive, means and opportunity to influence Philip's career and to examine the historiography that make such assertions. Some doubt will always hang over this, but if Plato's actions did lead to Philip being given command over a region of Macedonia in which he developed his war machine, with which he rolled back the Illyrian invaders in or around 359 B.C., following the death of his brother against them in battle, then he may certainly be said to have owed no small part of the attainment of his kingdom to the political manoeuvrings of that famous Athenian philosopher. In which case it may be fairly said that some significant credit—or perhaps blame—for the eventual successes of Alexander and his subsequent impact on global history derives in no small part from him to whom, as some have said, all of Western philosophy consists merely of footnotes. And to that somewhat dubious legacy, then, another brief annotation is here added.

Bibliography

[133] INGEMAR DÜRING, "Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition", *Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis* 63.2 (1957), 317; see too INGEMAR DÜRING, *Aristoteles,* Heidelberg 1966, 15-16.
[134] ANDREW L. FORD, *Aristotle as Poet: the Song for Hermias and its Contexts,* Oxford 2011, 162. n. 10.
[135] FORD, *Aristotle as Poet*, 162.

AELIAN, *Varia Historia*, in RUDOLF HERCHER (ed.), *Claudii Aeliani de natura animalium libri xvii, varia historia*, *epistolae*, *fragmenta*, Leipzig 1866.

AESCHINES, *On the Embassy* in *Aeschines with an English translation by Charles Darwin Adams, Ph.D*., Cambridge, MA & London 1919.

M. ANDRONIKOS, "The Royal Tomb at Vergina and the Problem of the Dead", *Analekta Ex Athenon* (*Athens Annals of Archaeology*) 13 (1980), 168-178.

EDWARD M. ANSON, "Philip II, Amyntas Perdicca, and Macedonian Royal Succession", *Historia* 58 (2009), 276-286.

EDWARD M. ANSON, *Alexander the Great: Themes and Issues*, London 2013.

ARISTOTLE, *Poetics,* in R. Kassel (ed.), *Aristotle's Ars Poetica*, Oxford 1966.

BARRY BALDWIN, "Athenaeus and His Work", *Acta Classica,* 19 (1976), 21-42.

JULIUS BELOCH, *Griechische Geschichte,* Strassburg 1912.

L. BERTELLI, "La lettera di Speusippo a Filippo: il problema dell 'autenticità'", *Atti Accademia Scienze e Lettere di Toreno. Classe di Lettere* 111 (1977), 75-111.

E. BICKERMANN & J. SYKUTRIS, *Speusipps Brief am König Philip*. *Text, Übersetzgung, Untersuchungen. Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Philologisch-historische Klasse,* Bd. 80. 3, 1928.

K.G. BOEHNECKE, *Demosthenes, Lycurgos, Hypereides und ihr Zeitalter*, Bd. 1. Berlin 1864.

R. S. BLUCK, *Plato's Seventh and Eighth Letters,* Cambridge 1947.

WALTER BURKERT, EDWIN L. MINAR JR. (trans.), *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, Cambridge, MS 1972.

JOHN BURNET (ed.), *Platonis Opera*, Oxford 1903.

R. G. BURY (ed.), *Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA 1942.

ANTON–HERMANN CHROUST, "A Second (and Closer) Look at Plato's Philosophy", *Archiv für Staatswissenschaften und Geschichte* 48 (1962), 575-597.

ANTON–HERMANN CHROUST, "Aristotle's Sojourn in Assos", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* (Franz Steiner Verlag) 21.2 (April–June 1972), 170–176.

DIO CHRYSOSTOM, J. DE ARNIM (ed.), *Orationes,* Berlin 1893.

D. CLAY, "The origins of the Socratic dialogue" in P.A. VAN DER WAERDT (ed.), *The Socratic Movement,* Ithaca/London 1994.

R. COHEN & G. GLOTZ, *Histoir Grecque*, Paris 1929.

DEMOSTHENES, *Third Philippic*, in *Demosthenes with an English translation by J. H. Vince, M.A.* Cambridge, MA & London 1930.

INGEMAR DÜRING, *Herodicus the Cratetean: A study in anti-Platonic Tradition,* Stockholm & Göteborg 1941.

INGEMAR DÜRING, "Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition"*, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis* 63.2 (1957), 317.

INGEMAR DÜRING, *Aristoteles,* Heidelberg 1966.

C. EHRHARDT, "Two Notes on Philip of Macedon's First Interventions in Thessaly", *Classical Quarterly* 17 (1967), 296-301.

EUSEBIUS, *Chronicon bipartitum, ex Arm. textu in Lat. conversum, adnotationibus auctum, Gr. fragmentis exornatum, opera J.B. Aucher* 1818.

ALBERT FLECKEISEN (ed.), *Vitae: Cornelius Nepos*, Leipzig 1886.

JAAP-JAN FLINTERMAN, "'... largely fictions ...': Aelius Aristides on Plato's dialogues", *Ancient Narrative* 1 (2000-2001), 32-54.

ANDREW L. FORD, *Aristotle as Poet: the Song for Hermias and its Contexts,* Oxford 2011.

ROBIN LANE FOX, *Alexander the Great*, New York 2004.

ERNST A. FREDRICKSMEYER, "Once More the Diadem and Barrel-Vault at Vergina", *American Journal of Archaeology*, 87.1 (Jan., 1983), 99-102.

KURT VON FRITZ, *Platon in Sizilien und das Problem der Philosophenherrschaf,* Berlin 1968.

J. GEFFCKEN, "Antiplatonica", *Hermes* 64 (1929) 87-109.

THOMAS GOULD, *The Ancient Quarrel Between Poetry and Philosophy,* Princeton 1990.

W. GREENWALT, "The Search for Arrhidaeus" *Ancient World* 10 (1984), 69-77.

W.K.C. GUTHRIE, *A History of Greek Philosophy IV: Plato: the Man and His Dialogues*, Cambridge 2000.

R. HACKFORTH, *The Authorship of the Platonic Epistles,* Manchester 1913.

EDITH HAMILTON & HUNTINGTON CAIRNS (eds.), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, Princeton 1989.

N.G.L. HAMMOND & G.T. GRIFFITH, *A History of Macedonia, volume II 550-336 BC,* Oxford 1979.

N.G.L. HAMMOND, "The Evidence for the Identity of the Royal Tombs at Vergina" in W.L. ADAMS & E.N. BORZA (eds.), *Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage,* Washington, D.C 1982, 117-118.

R. HARDER, "Prismata", *Philologus*, 85 (1930), 250-254.

J. HARWARD, *The Platonic Epistles,* Cambridge 1932.

M.W. HASLAM, "Plato, Sophron, and the dramatic dialogue", *BICS* 19 (1972), 17-38.

T. K. HUBBARD (ed.), *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook of Basic Documents*, Berkeley, CA 2003.

F. JACOBY, "Karystios von Pergamon", in PAULY-WISSOWA-KROLL-MITTELHAUS, *Real Encyclopädie der classischen Alternumswissenschaft,* Stuttgart: 1893, 10.2, col. 2054.

WERNER W. JAEGER, *Aristoteles: Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung,* Berlin 1923.

WERNER W. JAEGER, "Aristotle's Verses in Praise of Plato", *Classical Quarterly* 21 (1927), 13-17.

MARCUS JUNIANUS JUSTINUS, *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus, trans. with notes, by the Rev. John Selby Watson*, London 1853.

GEORG KAIBEL, *Athenaei Naucratitae Dipnosophistarum Libri XV,* Vol. 3, Leipzig 1890.

A. KOTTARIDI, "The Palace at Aigae", in Robin Lane Fox (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Ancient Macedon: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Macedon, 540 BC-300 AD,* Leiden & Boston 2011, 297-334

DIOGENES LAËRTIUS, in R.D. HICKS (ed.), *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Cambridge, MA 1972.

P.W. LEHMANN, "The So-Called Tomb of Philip II: an Addendum", *American Journal of Archaeology* 86 (1982), 437-442.

HENRY GEORGE LIDDELL & ROBERT SCOTT, revised and edited by SIR HENRY STUART JONES, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edition, Oxford 1994.

MINOR M. MARKLE III, "Support of Athenian Intellectuals for Philip: A Study of Isocrates' *Philippus* and Speussipus' Letter to Philip", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 96 (1976), 80-99.

LAURA MCCLURE, "Subversive Laughter: the Sayings of Courtesans in Book 13 of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*", *The American Journal of Philology*, 124.2 (Summer, 2003), 259-294.

ARNALDO MOMIGLIANO, *Filippo il Macedone*: *Saggio sulla storia greca del IV secolo a. C.,* Florence 1934.

K. R. MOORE, *Sex and the Second Best City: Sex and Society in the* Laws *of Plato,* London 2005.

K. R. MOORE, "Persaeus of Citium: A lapsed stoic?", *Rosetta: Papers of The Institutute of Archaeology and Aniquity* 7 (2009), 1-21.

K. R. MOORE, "Was Pythagoras ever really in Sparta?", *Rosetta: Papers of The Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity* 6 (2009), 1-25.

GLENN A. MORROW, *Plato's Cretan City: A Historical Interpretation of* the Laws, Princeton, NJ 1960.

GLENN A. MORROW, *Plato's Epistles,* New York 1962.

C. MÜLLER, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, Paris 1841-1870, reprinted Frankfurt 1975.

STEPHEN O. MURRAY, *Homosexualities,* Chicago 2000.

DEBORAH NAILS, *The People of Plato: A Prosopography of People and Other Socratics,* Indianapolis, IN & Cambridge 2002.

ANTHONY FRANCIS NATOLI, *The Letter of Speussippus to Philip II: Introduction, Text, Translation and Commentary* in *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Heft 176, Stuttgart 2004.

W. NEUMANN & J. KERCHENSTEINER, *Platon: Briefe,* München 1967.

ANNA NTINTI, "The Death(s) of Plato" IN ANNETTE MERZ and TEUN TIELEMAN (eds.), *The letter of Mara bar Sarapion in context: proceedings of the symposium held at Utrecht University, 10-12 December 2009*, Leiden/Boston 2012, 183-192.

CLAUDE ORRIEUX & PAULINE SCHMITT-PANTEL, *A History of Ancient Greece,* London 1999.

JOHN PAULAS, "How to Read Athenaeus' *Deipnosophists*", *The American Journal of Philology* 133.3 (Fall, 2012), 403-439.

PAUSANIAS, *Pausanias' Description of Greece with an English Translation by W.H.S. Jones, Litt.D., and H.A. Ormerod, M.A., in 4 Volumes*, Cambridge, MA & London 1918.

PLUTARCH, *Life of Pelopidas* in *Plutarch's Lives with an English Translation by Bernadotte Perrin*, Vol. 5, Cambridge, MA & London 1917.

PLUTARCH, *de Genio Socratis,* in *Plutarch's Morals*, *translated from the Greek by several hands. Corrected and revised by William W. Goodwin, PhD Boston*, *Little, Brown, and Company*, Cambridge 1874.

L. A. POST (ed.), *Thirteen Epistles of Plato,* Oxford 1925.

A. S. REGINOS, *Platonica: The Anecdotes Concerning the Life and Writings of Plato*, Leiden 1976.

C. SAATSOGLOU-PALIADELI, "The Arts of Virgina-Aegae, the Cradle of the Macedonian Kingdom" in ROBIN LANE FOX (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Ancient Macedon: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Macedon, 540 BC-300 AD,* Leiden & Boston 2011, 271-296.

TREVOR J. SAUNDERS (trans. & ed.), *Plato: The Laws,* Harmondsworth, Middlesex 1970.

FRIEDRICH SCHLEIERMACHER, W. DOBSON (trans.), *Introductions to the Dialogues of Plato*, Cambridge 1836.

K. SCHMIDT, *De Herodico Crateteo,* Elbing 1886.

ANNE D. R. SHEPPARD, *Studies on the 5th and 6th Essays of Proclus' Commentary on the* Republic, Göttingen 1980.

DIODORUS SICULUS, in IMMANEL BEKKER, LUDWIG DINDORF, FRIEDRICH VOGEL, KURT THEODOR FISCHER (eds.), *Diodori Bibliotheca Historica, Vol 4-5*, Leipzig 1903-1906.

HERBERT WEIR SMYTH, *Greek Grammar*, Harvard, MA 1984.

GIUSEPPE SQUILLACE, "Consensus Strategies Under Philip and Alexander" in ELIZABETH CARNEY and DANIEL OGDEN (eds.), *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*, London and New York 2010, 69-80.

A. E. TAYLOR, *Plato: the Man and His Work,* London 2012.

LEONARDO TARAN, *Academica: Plato, Phillip of Opus and the Pseudo-Platonic* Epinomis, Philadelphia, PA 1975.

THEOCRITUS, *Dioscuri* (*Idyll* 22) in J. M. EDMONDS (ed.), *Greek Bucolic Poets: Theocritus. Bion. Moschus* (Loeb Classical Library No. 28), Harvard, MA 1912.

M.B. TRAPP, "Plato in the *Deipnosophistae*" in D. BRAUND & J. WILKINS (eds), *Athenaeus and his world. Reading Greek culture in the Roman Empire,* Exeter 2000, 353-363.

HENRY DICKINSON WESTLAKE, *Essays on the Greek Historians and Greek History*. Manchester 1969.

ULRICH VON WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, *Aristotles und Athen*, Berlin 1893.

ULRICH VON WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, *Platon Zweiter Band Beilagen Und Textkritik Zweite Auflage*, Berlin 1920.

ULRICH VON WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, *Platon I - Sein Leben und Seine Werke,* Berlin 1929.

ULLRICH WILCKEN, G.C. RICHARDS (trans.), *Alexander the Great*, London & New York 1967.

IAN WORTHINGTON, *By the Spear: Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Rise and Fall of the Macedonian Empire,* Oxford 2014.

K. ZEPERNICK, "Die Exzerpte des Athenaeus in dem *Dipnosophisten* und ihr Glaubwürdigkeit", *Philologus* 77 (1921), 311-363.